

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PARIS 06430 01 OF 02 041534Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DEAE-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 IO-13 JUSE-00
NSAE-00 SNM-02 TRSE-00 USIA-06 NSC-05 OES-06 OMB-01
DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 L-03 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
AID-05 /085 W
-----041547Z 023342 /44

R 041342Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0271
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
WMCONSUL BORDEAUX
AMCONSULHLYON
AMCONSUL MARSEILLE
AMCONSUL NICE
AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 06430

PASS DEA

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: FR, SNAR
SUBJECT: INTERIOR MINISTER SPEAKS OUT ON FRENCH DRUG
PROBLEM

1. MEMBER OF INTERIOR MINISTER MICHEL PONIATOWSKI'S
STAFF FILLED US IN ON THE BACKGROUND AND DETAILS OF
MINISTER'S STATEMENTS LAST WEEK THAT FRANCE (IN COOPE-
RATION WITH GERMANY) WOULD BE MAKING A DEMARCHE TO THE
NETHERLANDS TO COPE WITH THE GROWING DRUG PROBLEM FROM
AMSTERDAM SOURCES. THE PROBLEM OF DRUG ABUSE HAD BEEN
BECOMING MORE SERIOUS IN FRANCE OVER THE LAST YEAR,
COMING DRAMATICALLY TO THE PUBLIC'S ATTENTION IN JANUA-
RY AND FEBRUARY WITH DEATHS FROM OVERDOSES ON THE
MEDITERRANEAN COAST AND IN CAEN (WHERE THE MAYOR'S SON
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PAGE 02 PARIS 06430 01 OF 02 041534Z

WAS IMPLICATED). PONIATOWSKI RESPONDED TO THE GROWING
PUBLICITY AND PUBLIC ATTENTION WITH A SPECIAL PRESS
CONFERENCE LAST WEEK IN WHICH HE ANNOUNCED INCREASED
RANDOM POLICE CHECKS AROUND THE COUNTRY AND A GENERAL
CRACKDOWN ON TRAFFICKERS.

2. THE DRUG PROBLEM IN FRANCE HAS UNFORTUNATELY,

HOWEVER, BECOME MORE COMPLICATED AND MORE DIFFICULT TO DEAL WITH OVER THE LAST COUPLE OF YEARS, DUE TO THE FACT THAT TRAFFIC PATTERNS HAVE TAKEN THE FORM OF A "TRAFFIC DE FOURMIS" (ANT TRAFFIC) RATHER THAN BIG CARRIERS. ALTHOUGH BIG SEIZURES ARE STILL BEING MADE, THE NUMBER OF SMALL-TIME TRAFFICKERS, WHO TRAVEL TO AMSTERDAM FOR THEIR OWN USE AND SOMETIMES FOR A FEW FRIENDS, HAS RISEN SHARPLY. THEIR TRAVEL PATTERNS TAKE ALL AVAILABLE FORMS: PERSONAL CARRIER BY TRAIN, PLANE, CAR AND BARGE, AND MAIL CONTAINING HEROIN IN SEALED PLASTIC CONTAINERS, SO AS TO AVOID BEING DETECTED BY EQUIPMENT OR SMELL. THE FRENCH HAVE TRIED A VARIETY OF MEASURES TO INTERCEPT THIS TRAFFIC, INCLUDING SPOT CHECKS AND ENTIRE SEARCHES OF AMSTERDAM - PARIS TRAINS, BUT BOTH WITHOUT GREAT SUCCESS. THEY FEEL THAT FOR EACH SMALL SEIZURE THEY MAKE ON THESE RUNS, MANY MORE ARE GETTING THROUGH. WHILE THE FRENCH BELIEVE THIS PROBLEM IS VERY DIFFICULT TO COPE WITH, THEY ALSO FEEL SOMETHING MUST BE DONE SOON, AND PONIATOWSKI'S ATTENTION TO INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AS WELL AS LOCAL REPRESSION AND PREVENTION WAS MADE WITH THIS IN MIND.

3. OUR INTERIOR SOURCE SAID PONIATOWSKI'S PLAN WILL BE SPELLED OUT AT THE NEXT NARCOTICS MEETING OF THE EC NINE PLUS SWEDEN, WHICH WILL TAKE PLACE ON MARCH 25 IN PARIS, AND WILL TAKE THE FORM OF THE FOLLOWING CONCRETE PROPOSALS: (A) SETTING UP A FRENCH OFFICE IN AMSTERDAM TO WORK WITH AND COORDINATE ANTI-DRUG ACTION WITH THE DUTCH; (B) COORDINATE LABORATORY ANALYSES OF HEROIN PICKED UP IN CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 PARIS 06430 01 OF 02 041534Z

THE 10 PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES TO PIN DOWN THE SUPPLYING

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PAGE 01 PARIS 06430 02 OF 02 041416Z
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DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 L-03 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

AID-05 /085 W

-----041548Z 022374 /43

R 041342Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

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AMCONSUL MARSEILLE

AMCONSUL NICE

AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 PARIS 06430

COUNTRIES; AND (C) INCREASED COORDINATION IN THE AREAS OF INFORMATION, PREVENTION AND EDUCATION. THE FRENCH ARE CAUTIOUS ABOUT SPECULATING ON WHAT THE DUTCH REACTION WILL BE TO THESE PROPOSALS BUT THEIR TENTATIVE FEELING IS THAT THE DUTCH WILL RESPOND FAVORABLY FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS: (A) THE DUTCH HAVE BECOME, ACCORDING TO OUR SOURCE, MORE AWARE OVER THE LAST YEAR AND-A-HALF OF THE DANGERS OF THE DRUG PROBLEM IN THE NETHERLANDS AND ELSEWHERE IN EUROPE, AND (B) THE FRENCH SUGGESTIONS, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF SETTING UP A SPECIAL OFFICE IN AMSTERDAM, AMOUNT TO AN ACCELERATION OF ALREADY EXISTING AND ACCEPTED IDEAS AMONG THE 10. NOTE: INFORMATION ABOUT SUCH AN OFFICE SHOULD BE CAREFULLY PROTECTED AS THE FRENCH HAVE NOT YET DECIDED EXACTLY HOW TO PRESENT THE PROPOSAL IN THE MARCH 25 MEETING, NOR ARE THEY SURE CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 PARIS 06430 02 OF 02 041416Z

WHETHER THEY WILL RUN INTO DUTCH OPPOSITION.

4. THE REASON FOR INCLUDING GERMANY AS A PARTNER IN THE FRENCH DEMARCHE WAS THAT GERMANY IS IN A SITUATION ANALOGOUS TO FRANCE, BEING A NON-PRODUCER AND A VULNERABLE NEIGHBOR OF THE NETHERLANDS. PONIATOWSKI, ACCORDING TO OUR SOURCE, HAS DESCRIBED THIS IDEA ORALLY WITH GERMAN MINISTER OF INTERIOR MAIHOFFER AND HAS SUPPOSEDLY RECEIVED HIS GENERAL AGREEMENT. IF THE MARCH 25 MEETING DOES NOT MEET FRENCH (AND GERMAN) EXPECTATIONS OR IF THERE ARE NO RESULTS IN THE MONTHS THAT FOLLOW, PONIATOWSKI INTENDS TO ELEVATE THE DEBATE OF THIS SUBJECT IN THE NEXT MINISTERIAL NARCOTICS MEETING OF THE 10, SCHEDULED FOR THE END OF THIS YEAR OR EARLY NEXT YEAR.

5. QUESTIONED ABOUT THE POSSIBLE EXISTENCE OF LABORATORIES IN THE MARSEILLE AREA (PARIS 3267), OUR INTERIOR SOURCE SAID THAT EVER SINCE THE FRENCH CONNECTION HAD BEEN CLOSED DOWN, THERE HAS BEEN A TRICKLE OF WHITE HEROIN IN THAT AREA. OF THE TWO POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS -- THAT THERE ARE ONE OR TWO SMALL LABS STILL OPERATING AND THAT THIS TRICKLE DRAWS FROM UNUSED OLD STOCK, MAINLY SOUTHEAST ASIAN NUMBER FOUR -- OUR SOURCE AGREES WITH THE JUDGMENT OF THE FRENCH POLICE THAT THE LATTER IS STILL THE MORE PROBABLE EXPLANATION.
RUSH

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REPORTS, DEMARCHE, DRUG CONTROL, DRUG TRAFFIC
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 04-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977PARIS06430
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770075-0554
Format: TEL
From: PARIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770392/aaaaddgs.tel
Line Count: 181
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: e6b8adbd-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3206932
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: INTERIOR MINISTER SPEAKS OUT ON FRENCH DRUG PROBLEM
TAGS: SNAR, FR, GE, NL, (PONIATOWSKI, MICHEL)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/e6b8adbd-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009